

Bible Survey

Lesson 13 – Acts (Part 1)

1. The Summary

Acts tells one of the most fascinating stories of the Bible. It is the story of the _____ of the early Christian Church. It tells how a small group of believers spread the message of salvation to their world within the short span of a few generations. They did this in spite of severe _____ that included the loss of their homes and possessions, and sometimes their lives. They did it without benefit of a written New Testament, college or seminary, printing press, radio, large sums of money, television, church buildings, automobiles, trains or airplanes, etc.

Chapters 1-7 tell how the Gospel spread throughout _____. In chapters 8-12 God uses _____ to force these young believers out of Jerusalem and into the surrounding areas of _____ and _____. Beginning with chapter 13 and continuing throughout the rest of the book, Paul and his missionary team take the Gospel to “the _____” of their world.

The message of the early church was very simple. Every time they preached and witnessed, the message of the _____ and _____ was either explicit or implicit in what they said for they realized there could be no salvation apart from belief in these two things.

Their worship was also simple. There were no rich vestments, nor elaborate rituals, for there were no church buildings in which they could be used. Because there were no church buildings or cathedrals, their services took place in private homes. And yet they turned the world upside down (or right side up) and changed the course of history.

They went forth with zeal because they were convinced that Jesus Christ was actually _____. There was no doubt in their minds that He was alive.

2. The Author

The author is not mentioned in either Luke or Acts.

Three reasons why we believe it was Luke:

1. The “we” sections in Acts (16:8, 10, chs. 20 and 27)
2. Luke is mentioned as a companion of Paul in Col. 4:14 and Philemon 24. He is the only one of Paul’s known companions who is not mentioned by name in Acts.
3. There are medical terms used throughout Acts (1:3; 3:7; 9:18, 33; 13:11; 28:1-10)

3. The Title

The title, “Acts of the Apostles,” was not given to this book until the 2nd century. It was originally a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. When it began to be circulated separately it became known as “Acts of the Apostles.” Actually, only three apostles (Peter, James and John) are even mentioned to any extent in the book.

4. The Date

It appears from the material in this book that it was written about 30 years after the ascension (just before the death of Paul) ca. AD 62-65.

5. The Purpose

The *Gospel of Luke* was written to Theophilus to present the history of Christ in an orderly fashion. This book appears to be a follow-up to that letter (1:1). In this letter Luke shares a _____ of the establishing of the Church. He traces the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem, where it began, to Rome, the capital city of the empire.

6. The Importance of the Book

Acts provides the only inspired account of the beginning and early work of the Church. Just like the Gospels serve as a _____ between the Old Testament and the New Testament, *Acts* forms a _____ between the Gospels and the Epistles by providing

information that cannot be found anywhere else in the New Testament. Imagine how confusing it would be if we did not have the book of Acts and we went straight from the *Gospel of John* to the book of *Romans*. We would read *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* and we would have to ask, “Who is Paul and how did there come to be believers in Rome?”

7. The Theme

8. The Key Verse

9. The Outline

1:8 gives us a broad outline of the entire book

- I. The gospel is spread throughout _____ 1-7
- II. The gospel spreads to Judea and _____ 8-12
- III. The gospel spreads to the _____ of the world through Paul’s missionary efforts 13-28

The book can also be divided into a twofold division.

1-12	13-28
Peter	Paul
Jerusalem	Antioch
Jews	Gentiles

Peter occupies the major portion of chapters 1-12 and Paul of chapters 13-28. Peter’s activities were in the area of Jerusalem, while Paul was called to take the Gospel to the Gentiles in the surrounding areas. He founded churches in the provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia.

10. The Chapters to Remember

- 1 Ascension
- 2 Pentecost
- 8 Scattering of the Church (Philip and the Ethiopian)
- 9 Saul's conversion

ACTS

HISTORY AND SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

1	PETER	12 13	PAUL	28
	JEW		GENTILE	
	JERUSALEM		ANTIOCH	
1	7 8	12 13	UTTERMOST	28
	JERUSALEM	JUDEA AND SAMARIA		
	<i>"...and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem,</i>	<i>and in all Judea, and in Samaria,</i>		<i>and unto the uttermost part of the earth."</i> <i>Acts 1:8</i>